HOMETOWN HEROES
Amid pandemic, many in KC have stepped up. Section H

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June election will be test for pandemic preparation

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BY CRYSTAL THOMAS AND ALLISON KITE
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The day before he buried his wife, Orville Amos limped into the Kansas City Election Board's office to vote absentee.

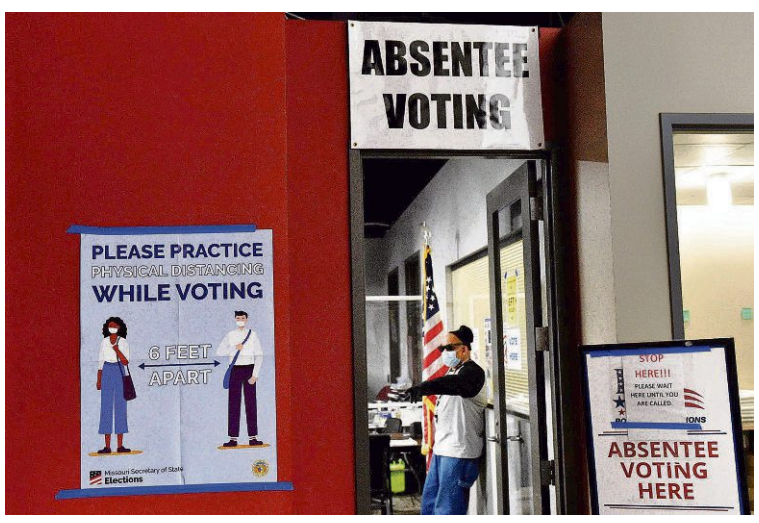
For 25 years, the 75-year-old Navy veteran was first in line at his precinct's polling place to cast his ballot in person. That would earn him a sticker he could show off in the election authority offices, where his wife had worked for 23 years.

The excitement Amos once felt about voting is gone now, eclipsed by grief over the death of his wife from lung cancer on March 25. And fear of the novel coronavirus.

"You know we are in that age group where we are the target of this virus," Amos said, clad in a white mask. "It's intimidating to come out in public even to go to the grocery store."

Concerns about voter safety led Missouri Gov. Mike Parson to move the April 7 local elections to June 2. On ballots across the state will be city council

SEE ELECTION, 8A



Above, election judges Craig Hampton, left, and Deborah Frazier work the absentee voting station as Orville Amos arrives at the Kansas City Board of Election Commissioners office inside Union Station to vote Wednesday.

At left, not only has the Kansas City Election Authority had to deal with creating a safe and secure voting environment during the coronavirus pandemic, but it's battling a drop in polling places and poll workers and a fearful public.

Kansas bill would track education progress of foster kids

BY LAURA BAUER AND JUDY L. THOMAS
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In the waning hours of the 2020 Kansas legislative session, lawmakers approved a measure that could finally address one of the key hurdles facing children in foster care.

An annual report card would track the academic progress and educational outcomes for foster children, who graduate at a rate that is just a fraction of their peers. The data would be collected the first of every year and shared with legislators.

"This for the first time will shine light on what we are and aren't doing for those nearly 8,000 kids who are in custody of the state," said Sen. Molly Baumgardner, R-Louisburg, who as head of the education committee championed the legislation. "…. You can't set goals if you don't know where you are here and now.

"Trust me, this report card isn't going to just be signed and returned, it will receive a lot of scrutiny, and I think it will help us move away from this is just one agency's responsibility, it's all of us together."

The legislation, part of a package of educational proposals bundled into one bill as the clock ticked down on the session, went to Gov. Laura Kelly last week.

A spokeswoman for Kelly said the governor is reviewing the bill.

"Since her days in the Kansas Senate, the Governor has been steadfast in pursuing ways to put all Kansas chil-

SEE FOSTER, 3A

Three numbers to watch in coronavirus statistics

BY KATIE BERNARD
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Even Jennifer Tolbert, a director of state health reform at the Kaiser Family Foundation, struggles to explain to friends how to make sense of the vast amount of data surrounding the coronavirus pandemic.

And that's even after she has worked closely with state level health data before COVID-19 presented the public with a daily barrage of case numbers, testing statistics and death tolls.

The numbers are reported differently by states and local governments, and change as the situation evolves. It can be difficult to parse the metrics.

One thing experts agree on: A surge in coronavirus infections is expected this summer as more places reopen to visitors and people return to gathering in crowds.

To help create a guide for the average person to make sense of it all, The Star sought advice from experts on both sides of the state line. In interviews, Tolbert, Kansas Department of Health and Environment Secretary Lee Norman, Kansas Health Institute Senior Analyst Charles Hunt and Enid Schatz the chair of the University of Missouri's Public Health department, explained what information is most useful for making personal decisions and judging whether COVID-19 is getting better or worse in their communities.

The experts pointed to a variety of metrics while warning that no one figure should be looked at in a vacuum. They cautioned that conditions in the

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